



**Kettering Town Centre
Area Action Plan
Submission - December 2010**



North Northamptonshire
Local Development Framework

Kettering
Borough Council

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP):

- Sets out a clear vision for Kettering town centre based on the development of eight distinctive "quarters".
- Demonstrates how this vision is being delivered, led by the Borough Council's Suite 16 Regeneration Programme.
- Provides the policy framework for bringing forward significant regeneration on key sites and for assessing planning applications in the town centre.
- Is part of Kettering Borough Council's approach to delivering growth and regeneration throughout the town, borough and wider North Northamptonshire sub-region, as set out through the Core Spatial Strategy and Kettering Borough Council's Community Strategy.

1.1.2 The vision for Kettering town centre is: "To create a vibrant heart for Kettering; a place that is characterful, distinctive and fun. The town centre will become a focal point for North Northamptonshire". To deliver this vision the AAP establishes eight "quarters" as depicted in Figure 1.1 and set out in Table 1.1 below. Development and growth in Kettering town centre will be focused around the development of these "zones" that provide distinctive functions, whilst combining together to form an integrated and coherent whole.

Figure 1.1 The Quarters



Table 1.1 The Quarters

Quarter	Focus
1. The Shopping Quarter	High street brands
2. The Yards	Niche and independent shops
3. The Restaurant Quarter	An improved leisure offer and community space
4. The Station Quarter	Commercial offices and transport interchange
5. The New Residential Quarter	A new residential community and improved open spaces and public realm
6. The Silver Street Quarter	Residential-led development and improvements to the public realm and connectivity to surrounding quarters
7. The Southern Quarter	Conservation and enhancement of the area's heritage assets and cultural facilities, and opportunity sites to attract investment and regeneration to the town centre
8. The Headlands Quarter	Conservation and enhancement of historic Victorian and Edwardian residential suburbs

1.1.3 The AAP is a policy and delivery tool and considers land use, funding, timing and implementation. It identifies key infrastructure projects including investment into the public realm and transportation. The AAP sets out a vision and objectives and contains policies and proposals for delivering this vision.

1.1.4 This AAP is a Development Plan Document and forms part of the North Northamptonshire Local Development Framework (LDF). It will replace the Local Plan Policies set out in Appendix 2. The AAP has been prepared by Kettering Borough Council but takes into account views of stakeholders and residents who made comments during the Issues and Options consultation (October 2006) and the Preferred Options consultation (August 2008).

It also takes into account consultation undertaken in the preparation of the *Kettering Masterplan* (2005) and the *Kettering Town Centre Framework* (2007), the *Western Quarter Masterplan* (2007) and more recent work undertaken by Savills in the preparation of *Kettering Futures*. Additional public consultation was also undertaken on the Kettering Town Centre Transport Strategy and two phases of public realm enhancements which have further informed the production of the AAP. The Council has consulted all key stakeholders at all stages in the preparation of this Development Plan Document (DPD).

1.1.5 The proposals contained within this AAP are in accordance with all other national and local planning guidance and have been informed by background papers, evidence documents and the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Structure of the Area Action Plan

1.1.6 This plan sets out a series of policies and proposals aimed at delivering the vision for Kettering town centre. Table 1.2 provides signposts to key sections of the plan.

Figure 1.2 The Restaurant Quarter



Table 1.2 AAP structure overview

Section Overview	
Section 1	Provides an Executive Overview of growth and regeneration in Kettering Borough and the Kettering Town Centre and introduces the context, Vision and Objectives of the Area Action Plan.
Section 2	Sets out the spatial strategy for the Plan Area, developed to deliver the necessary growth and regeneration priorities for the Kettering town centre, including retail, housing and commercial offices.
Section 3	Sets out the transport and accessibility policies required to enable the town centre to accommodate the planned regeneration.
Section 4	Includes a series of general, topic based policies that will guide the quality of future development in the town centre.
Section 5	Presents the eight urban quarters that have been identified in the town centre and sets out the principles which will guide development in these areas. These principles are supported by an Urban Codes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
Section 6	Sets out the delivery and implementation arrangements for the plan including development contributions, phasing and a monitoring framework
The Proposals Map	Depicts the land uses allocated in this plan , as well as other key areas of change, such as public realm improvement areas

How to comment?

~~1.1.7 You may be aware of previous documents and consultation events already undertaken to progress the Area Action Plan for Kettering town centre. All previous responses received have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this final version of the AAP - Proposed Submission.~~

~~1.1.8 We will be publishing the Proposed Submission version of the AAP for a eight week period of consultation from 16 August to the ~~18 October 25 October~~ 2010. Comments at this stage must and can only relate to legal requirements or the 'soundness' of the Plan. Detailed comments into the allocated developments or the scale of development are not required at this time. **Legal requirements** include that the plan has:~~

- ~~• Been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement~~
- ~~• Been subject to Sustainability Appraisal~~
- ~~• Has regard to national planning policy~~
- ~~• Has regard to the Kettering Sustainable Community Strategy.~~

~~1.1.9 To be **sound** a plan must be **justified, effective** and **consistent** with national policy. This means that the document must be:~~

Justified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founded on a robust and credible evidence base • The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives
Effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverable • Flexible • Able to be monitored

1.1.10 — Comments on the tests of soundness as detailed above can be made via:

- Kettering Borough Council's consultation portal: <http://consult.kettering.gov.uk/portal>
- Kettering Borough Council's planning policy and infrastructure website: <http://www.kettering.gov.uk>
- Write to Kettering Borough Council's Planning Policy and Infrastructure Team at: *Planning Policy and Infrastructure, Development Services, Kettering Borough Council, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX*

1.1.11 If you have any queries please telephone the Planning Policy and Infrastructure Team on 01536 534316 or email planningpolicy@kettering.gov.uk.

1.1.12 Baseline studies that have informed the policy can be viewed on the Borough Council's website at www.kettering.gov.uk or can be made available on request from the Planning Policy and Infrastructure Team, Development Services at the Borough Council's Offices.

You can get the information in this document in large print or braille.

If English is not your first language and you need help in translating this document please contact Customer Services on 01536 410333.

What Happens Next?

1.1.13 Following this consultation, and subject to the review of the consultation responses received, the AAP will be submitted to the Secretary of State. The AAP will then be examined by an independent inspector who will produce a binding report. Provided the inspector finds the AAP to be sound it will then be adopted and will form part of the North Northamptonshire Local Development Framework.

1.2 Executive Overview

1.2.1 Kettering Borough lies within the North Northamptonshire sub-region, part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) growth area, and is expected to facilitate growth of some 13,100 homes by 2021. North Northamptonshire is the largest growth area outside of London, an area that is set to grow to a population of over 370,000 people.

1.2.2 As set out in the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS), Kettering will remain the main retail centre in the sub-region (delivering a minimum net increase of 20,500m² of comparison retail floor space) and is required to deliver more jobs than neighbouring towns (16,200 new jobs). In this context, Kettering has a key role to play in delivering the vision for North Northamptonshire, and in doing so, Kettering Borough Council wants existing and new communities to make Kettering town centre the first choice for services and facilities.

1.2.3 This vision is already being delivered in Kettering Borough - the 2008/9 Annual Monitoring Report shows that housing completions are on target, and that the borough has seen a net increase in VAT registrations in recent years, indicating the Kettering is seen as a good location in which to invest.

1.2.4 Members have made their priorities for infrastructure and jobs-led growth clear – these are the prerequisites of growth. Members have indicated they wish to use the growth agenda to leverage three key and interrelated ambitions for the borough; namely:-

- A better offer for our town centres
- A better education and training offer
- A better employment offer – high grade, higher density jobs

1.2.5 The mutually supportive role of these three aspirations cannot be over-stated. The town centre and the skills base will be persuasive to inward investors. Similarly, high grade employment supports a vibrant town centre.

The Vision and The Quarters

1.2.6 The Council's vision is to create town centres that are: *“Characterful, Distinctive, and Fun”*

1.2.7 For Kettering town centre, these three key words are enshrined within the AAP vision (see Section 1.4) and will help to ensure that the town centre is more than just a place to shop. It will have an experiential offer that encourages visitors to spend time in, and enjoy, our town centre.

1.2.8 To deliver the vision the AAP establishes eight "quarters", set out on page 4. Development and growth in the Plan Area will be focused around the development of these "zones" that provide distinctive functions, whilst combining together to form an integrated and coherent whole.

1.2.9 Developing a new town centre will not be enough. Any “new” development will soon be eclipsed by a newer one elsewhere. Internet shopping patterns are changing – rapidly. (Research has indicated a one third increase in Internet retail spend, compared with around 3% for the traditional retail sector). Functional shopping will not be sufficient in itself. For a market town to compete it must offer something else. It must be a rounded experience with lots to offer. This leads to a few key principles:-

- Any redevelopment should be characterful to reflect the locality.
- The quality of design must be high.
- Material quality must be high.
- In creating a characterful experience, distinctive zones are advantageous.

1.2.10 Furthermore, the area must have ambiance and shoppers must feel free to enjoy a quality atmosphere and environment. In short, anonymous developments that could be anywhere should be resisted. In this context, the ingredients of a good town centre area as follows: -

- A Restaurant Quarter, adjacent to good quality public space and near leisure activities.

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- ‘Niche’ and individual shops in a traditional street scene (the Yards).
- Modern high-street brands well presented in larger units, to allow a retailer’s ‘full offer’ (the Shopping Quarter).

1.2.11 In every case, each of these zones benefits from clustered uses within them and also from being adjacent to a complementary cluster. Movement between zones must be relaxed and safe.

Suite 16 Regeneration Programme

1.2.12 To deliver Members’ expectations of infrastructure and jobs-led growth and the vision for Kettering town centre summarised above, the Borough Council has developed the Suite 16 Programme. The programme is staffed by officers seconded from within the Council, and has been developed alongside our partners, utilising - where necessary - external expertise from a number of different professions. Wherever possible, the programme will be delivered using external challenge funding, although it is recognised that sometimes match-funding or catalytic investment is required to generate further private investment.

1.2.13 It is important to state again, the mutually supportive role of the three aspirations (better jobs, better education, better town centres) and to explain how the Suite 16 projects deliver a coordinated and planned approach to the delivery of the AAP, and by definition, to the delivery of growth in Kettering Borough. Below is an overview (summarised in table 1.3) of the successes and aims of the Suite 16 Programme, under the broad headings of education, employment and town centres.

Table 1.3 Suite 16 projects overview

Suite 16 Project Area	Done	Doing	Planned
Education and Training Offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Tresham College Campus • Two new academies opened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded degree and higher education opportunities • Schools attainment rising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tresham College Extension approved
Higher Grade Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chesham house design and technology centre open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford University Press relocating to Kettering • Grants on offer for business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New employment site as part of East Kettering urban extension
Creating Better Town Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Realm Phase 1 complete (Market Place) • Transport Strategy Consultation in 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Realm Phases 2 and 3 (Horsemarket, Market Street, Sheep Street) Consultation complete • Phase 2 and 3 construction from Autumn 2010 • Market Place Restaurants construction commenced (Restaurant Quarter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail expansion, including department store, at Wadcroft (Shopping Quarter) • Niche and independent retail at Soans Yard • Office hub and transport interchange at the train station (Station Quarter) • New Residential Quarter • Opportunities for regeneration in the Southern Quarter.

Enabling a better education and training offer

1.2.14 Whilst the University Challenge bid proved to be unsuccessful for Kettering (and, indeed, for many areas in the UK), we have continued to push for better education in Primary, Secondary, Further and Higher Education establishments. The creation of two new academies (the Buccleuch Academy and Kettering Science Academy) is a fantastic achievement for Kettering.

1.2.15 A new £23m campus for Tresham College opened in April 2008 which has brought additional higher education to the town, and will continue to expand its range of courses. The development of the new campus also provides an opportunity for the regeneration of a key edge-of-town-centre site. Investment continues in the new Tresham campus extension granted planning permission in 2010. The Borough Council is committed to supporting and enabling a broader Higher Education and Further Education offer at Tresham and other providers.

Providing Higher Grade, Higher Density Jobs

1.2.16 To deliver the ambitious target of 16,200 new jobs by 2021, the Suite 16 programme is seeking to provide a dual offer in terms of new jobs in the Borough. The office hub and transport interchange at the Station Quarter will deliver an environment suited to those businesses which can benefit from the excellent rail connections offered by Kettering; being less than 1 hour from London it is well-placed to serve the businesses in the north of London, yet at a fraction of the land and rental values. Future investment in the rail station and rail network will only serve to improve Kettering's standing as a key stop on the Midland Mainline to London St. Pancras and through to Europe. In this context, the Borough Council is actively supporting discussions to extend electrification of the line beyond Bedford, which would increase rail speeds and passenger capacity. This may also facilitate improvements to accessibility within the town centre, which is currently constrained by low bridges on Northampton Road and Rothwell Road.

1.2.17 The keen focus on job creation in the town centre has also been demonstrated through the development of Chesham House Design and Technology Centre. The project was funded through £800,000 of external challenge funding and £200,000 of Kettering Borough Council match-funding. It has brought new high-tech employment to the town centre and forged new partnership working approaches with the University of Northampton.

1.2.18 In the context of supporting growth in and around Kettering, the Borough Council's ambition to act as an 'anchor' on a new business park on the edge of the town will kick-start a business economy. The new office park would be visible from the key east-west route of the A14 and introduces a new office park offer for the area. The move of the Borough Council's back office, alongside those of other public sector organisations, to an edge of town site will free-up key town centre sites for regeneration.

Creating better town centres

1.2.19 As outlined above, the Borough Council has a vision to create a town centre that is "characterful, distinctive and fun". This vision will be achieved by creating zones of specific uses that allow shops and businesses with a similar offer to cluster together. The town centre will become more than just a place to shop; it will have an experiential offer that encourages visitors to spend more time in, and enjoy, our town centre.

1.2.20 The new Market Place, which was 100% funded through external challenge funding, has acted as a catalyst for private sector investment including the acquisition and refurbishment of Kettering town centre's two historic hotels. The ever-evolving programme of family events - which has included a 5-day opening celebration attended by over 3,500 people, and hosting the Halfords cycle tour series - has attracted a new sector of the community to the town centre and brought additional trade with it.

1.2.21 The two current Growth-funded projects will build on the success of the new Market Place:

- The Market Place Restaurants will bring a new eating offer to the Market Place, with diners being entertained by performances under the canopy. These new brands will be encouraged to the town, and will - in-turn - bring a complimentary offer of coffee shops, retailers and businesses.
- Market Street will be traffic free and will encourage shoppers to meander through the area and Sheep Street will be a shared space where access traffic will be allowed, but where the pedestrian takes priority. This new area of public realm will link the Market Place to the Yards area, where niche and independent shops stay open into the evening and allow a safe and relaxed browsing experience; and to the High Street where big brand shopping can take place on a larger scale at the new Wadcroft development.

Suite 16 and the Kettering Town Centre Quarters.

1.2.22 Whilst the Suite 16 Programme is a borough wide initiative, many of the projects are aimed at delivering development and regeneration in Kettering Town Centre. Below is a summary of how Suite 16 is delivering projects and sites within the AAP:

- **The Restaurant Quarter** - Public realm improvements and the delivery of the Market Place restaurants will transform this part of town, creating a high quality community space and family orientated evening economy. The Restaurant Quarter is at the centre of the town centre and is a key transition to and between other quarters.
- **Wadcroft** - The Borough Council has undertaken technical studies and appraisals to bring forward a significant retail expansion to meet the targets set out in the Core Spatial Strategy. Consideration of the deliverability of this scheme is currently being worked on by a multi-agency steering group.
- **Soans Yards** - The Borough Council has undertaken technical studies and appraisals to bring forward a site suitable for niche and independent retailers. This will help to meet the retail targets set out in the Core Spatial Strategy and to complement the high street brands and bigger format stores planned for Wadcroft.
- **The Station Quarter** - The Borough Council has undertaken work to understand the physical constraints to bringing forward an office hub and transport interchange at the station, and is working with partners to identify funding and bring forward the vision for the quarter. This will maximise strong transportation links to London and Leicester and Nottingham and help to meet the job targets set out in the Core Spatial Strategy.
- **The Southern Quarter** - The relocation of Kettering Borough Council's Back office function away from a key town centre regeneration site would create an opportunity to bring significant new investment into the town centre - it would also enable the Borough Council to act as a catalyst for a new business park to help meet the job targets set out in the Core Spatial Strategy. Kettering Borough Council is already working to expand its excellent customer service offering with more front-line voluntary sector services, health services and greater partnership working with existing public sector partners such as the Police, Fire Service and HMRC - this would enhance and improve activity and footfall in this area of the town, thereby supporting the delivery of the vision for the Restaurant Quarter and town centre as a whole.
- **The New Residential Quarter** - The delivery of housing is key priority for Kettering Borough Council. The production of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and identification of on-site and strategic flood risk management measures to enable development has been prioritised by the Borough Council and its partners.
- **Transport Strategy and Green Links** - To accommodate the level of growth identified for Kettering town centre (and the borough as a whole), the delivery of transportation infrastructure is a key priority. An integrated Transport Strategy has been produced to inform the AAP, alongside a programme of highways improvements including the provision of new junctions and walking/cycling "Green Links".

1.2.23 Whilst each one of these projects will have a great impact on the town centre, they cannot be looked at in isolation: every single project delivered through Suite 16 builds on the success of its predecessor and will, itself, provide the building blocks upon which future projects are delivered. Whilst there will no doubt be some elements of these projects which have not and will not - find favour with everyone, the delivery of the overall vision will ensure the revitalisation and success of Kettering town centre, the borough and wider sub-region.

1.2.24 Work on the AAP sites and quarters that are not currently part of the Suite 16 Programme are also ongoing. Details of delivery and phasing is set out and expanded on in **Section 6 - Implementation and Monitoring**.

Modelling for Recovery

1.2.25 As set out above, the Borough Council has a clear vision for Kettering town centre and is actively delivering regeneration and growth. In this context, it is important to recognise that this is being undertaken in difficult economic conditions. In November 2008, the Executive of Kettering Borough Council resolved to supplement the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy with some strategic principles based around

'modelling for recovery.' Members of the Executive indicated that they felt it very important that the longer term regeneration aims of the Council were not derailed by the current economic conditions. The major schemes that are planned should continue to support the longer term viability of the area and to provide some major capital projects that would stimulate investment and employment locally. To assist with this, the following '*modelling for recovery*' principles have been developed to inform members of the Executive;

1. *Wherever possible, continue with all planned investments and programmes, to protect the local economy and lever in other investment*
2. *Given that we currently have no long-term debt, we should be prepared to consider debt-funding as a means of programme delivery or stimulus – if this can be shown to be sustainable and have a wider economic benefits*
3. *Organise our fiscal structures and business models to attract and retain the maximum amount of revenue within the local economy*
4. *To ensure all possible avenues are used within procurement rules to source locally*
5. *Protect the performance of Council services which come under particular strain*
6. *Work closely with partners in the voluntary, public and private sectors, to ensure optimum efficiency.*

1.2.26 In these particular economic circumstances there is a clear strategic choice to be made. The 'modelling for recovery' principles recognise the Council's role as a key local employer and a provider and procurer of services and works. They promote 'counter-cyclical' measures, which support local recovery, investment and confidence. Such an approach is designed to satisfy members' expressed desire to position the authority for recovery by undertaking steps with long-term yields and benefits, whilst providing employment and economic activity now.

1.3 Background

Context

1.3.1 Kettering is at the heart of North Northamptonshire, the UK's largest single growth area outside of London, an area that is set to grow in planned population to over 370,000 people, a community equivalent in population to the size of Bristol today. In this context, Kettering Borough Council wants existing and new communities to make Kettering town centre the first choice for services and facilities.

1.3.2 A historic market town with a history of boot and shoe manufacture, Kettering has unique architecture (much of it inspired by the architecture of J.A. Gotch), giving it a historic feeling that sets it apart from many other large neighbouring towns. Kettering is the principal shopping location in North Northamptonshire. Building on this strong foundation, Kettering Borough Council has a clear strategy for regeneration and investment in the town centre, which will see the town realise its potential to become a strong sub-regional centre. As at 2008, Kettering town centre was ranked 160th in the UK. ⁽¹⁾

Figure 1.3 Location Map



1 Javelin Venuescore (JV) 2008

Housing and Growth

1.3.3 Kettering has one of the widest selections of new homes in Britain, with home prices below the national average and the quality of housing and location very good, creating a strong demand for starter homes to executive detached properties. Whether it is contemporary urban living, historic market towns or quintessential villages, Kettering Borough is an attractive and accessible location. Developers such as Persimmon, Bovis and Redrow are building houses in Kettering and the surrounding area. Major schemes include East Kettering (a joint venture between Bee Bee Developments and Buccleuch Property). The development area covers over 741 acres of greenfield land to the east of the town. The plan is for circa 5,500 new homes by 2021 and two business villages.

1.3.4 Kettering is unique in that it is exceeding its housing growth targets in terms of delivery. This in part reflects the ambitions of the local Council and partners in responding to the opportunities the growth agenda offers. Backed up by planning policy the local Council is working closely with developers to help them, and offers pre-planning application advice to help speed up the process. Solid commitment to sustainable development will also see that Kettering retains its distinctive character and beauty while delivering our ambitious growth as all new developments will be built to high design and environmental standards. It is the aspiration of Kettering Borough Council Members that all residential developments achieve CABI Building For Life 'Silver' standard as a minimum, and developers are encouraged to submit projects for accreditation. Significant investment has also been earmarked for further improving the town centre and local transport links and green travel options making Kettering an area with excellent opportunities for the future.

Key Facts

- Top 3 Fastest Growing Towns in the UK
- 13,100 new homes
- 16,200 new jobs
- Channel 4 Top 10 location in country to self-build a new home
- Average home prices 30-50% cheaper than London and the South East

Transportation

1.3.5 Transportation links are a key strength of Kettering's central location and one of the reasons why it has become a popular destination for company headquarters, warehousing and new business park developments. Kettering is well connected to both the M1 and A1 via the A14 and the Midland Mainline Railway means that Kettering is just one hour to London (St. Pancras International) making it an ideal place for business headquarters and commuters. With a direct connection to London's St. Pancras International station, it is possible to have breakfast in Kettering and lunch in Paris. In addition to the recent opening of the direct rail link with Corby benefiting Kettering, the Council and its partners are working with Network Rail to ensure that the Midland Mainline remains a priority for future investment. Electrification of the line beyond Bedford, would increase rail speeds and passenger capacity, and enable associated improvement the town centre transportation network.

1.3.6 The Highways Agency have announced plans to widen the A14 to three lanes which runs directly to the South of the town. In addition, £20 million has been earmarked for improvement to the highway network in the town centre and to the East of the town as part of the East of Kettering Sustainable Urban Extension. The Council is also reviewing the transportation strategy for the town centre and is proposing sweeping changes which will see further pedestrianisation of the town centre, improved links between the station, the town centre and key visitor attraction, Wicksteed Park. These proposals have been receiving

Figure 1.4 Housing Development in Kettering Borough



widespread support during consultations with retailers, businesses, shoppers and local residents.

Key Facts

- 1 hour to London's St. Pancras International International Station by rail
- A14 dual carriage way set to expand to three lanes as part of a £180 million infrastructure investment
- 5 International airports within a convenient drive and/or accessible by public transport (London Heathrow, London Luton, London Stansted, Birmingham International and East Midlands)
- Kettering to Paris in 3 hours via Eurostar
- Within an hour of London, Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge city centres
- 75% of the Country's population in reach within two hours

Quality of Life and Facilities

1.3.7 One of the most attractive aspects of Kettering is its warm and welcoming environment in which to live, work and play, creating a high quality of life. Opportunities to enjoy town centre and outdoor pursuits are fast developing for both residents and workers. The town is the home of Wicksteed Park, the country's very first theme park and one of the UK's Top 20 visitor attractions. The new state of the art Lighthouse Theatre provides a wide range of shows and entertainment. A range of hotels, restaurants and country pubs cater for all tastes and there is a wealth of heritage to be explored including museums, historic buildings and churches. Kettering provides excellent sporting facilities; the Kettering Conference Centre is home to the National Volleyball Centre which is the base for the indoor volleyball team's training camp and competition. Beyond the town centre, the area has a wealth of countryside, natural heritage and woodland areas waiting to be explored.

1.3.8 Kettering Borough offers everything from a traditional market town to charming villages with picturesque beautiful countryside stretching for miles. The cost of living in Kettering is lower than the national average. Property is relatively cheap yet standards of education, health care and public services in general compare favourably and are continuously improving. There is also an abundance of well kept parks and open spaces and new developments such as East of Kettering will be built to high standards, with plenty of provision for parks, leisure facilities, education and health care.

Figure 1.5 Good Transport Links - Kettering A14



Key Facts

- Alfred East Art Gallery has a regular series of changing exhibitions by local artists as well as a permanent exhibition gallery displaying the work of Sir Alfred East, T C Gotch and other artists
- Manor House Museum holds temporary exhibitions, regular activities and a "hands on" approach to history make this a lively and vibrant place to visit, appealing to children and adults alike
- Winners of the 2009 Municipal Journal Achievement Award for offering opportunities to residents to become more active more often
- Host town to The Halfords Tour Series Cycling Race
- Within 10 miles of Kettering no less than eight historic buildings can be found which rival the best in the country with their beauty and interest

Climate Change and Energy

1.3.9 A key objective for North Northamptonshire, as expressed in the CSS is for the area to become a beacon of best practice and a benchmark for green living and safe, healthy communities through using the highest standards of design, sustainable construction methods and green technology.

1.3.10 In this context Kettering is rapidly becoming renowned for its proactive stance in tackling climate change and protecting the environment. In recognition of its proactive stance on renewable energy and climate change, Kettering hosted the UK's contribution to the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit. The wind farm at Burton Wold produces 20 Mega Watts (MW), enough power to supply half the homes in the Kettering. A further extension to Burton Wold and the newly permitted Albion Wind Farm could see 75% of the borough's energy usage catered for by renewable sources.

1.3.11 Growth in the region, presents a unique opportunity to initiate such a step change in the quality of development and delivery of environmental improvements. Emerging priorities in the context of climate change, energy efficiency and health mean that design considerations play an important part in delivering sustainable development. To help achieve this beacon status, the North Northamptonshire Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance on policies within the CSS that relate to design and sustainability. Building on this, an Energy Strategy for North Northamptonshire is being produced that will establish the evidence that will assist in the assessment of routes to compliance with the CSS, and the means by which this could be achieved.

1.3.12 Kettering Borough is already leading the way in this field. Construction has begun on a £4 million anaerobic digestion plant that will process food waste into renewable electricity. The plant's developers, North Northamptonshire based Fernbrook Bio, estimate that it will convert up to 30,000 tonnes of food and vegetable waste from domestic and commercial sources into approximately 1 Mega Watt (MW) of renewable energy each year. A resulting bio-fertilizer will be distributed to local farms as well.

Figure 1.6 Burton Wold Wind Farm



Key Facts

- Emerging centre for renewable energy and sustainable construction industries
- Wind farm estates
- Anaerobic digestion facilities
- 'Green' friendly transport and planning strategies

Business and Industry

1.3.13 A combination of excellent manufacturing capabilities, strong academic research and development and support from emerging technology companies means Kettering is centrally placed as an emerging centre for business location and expansion. Although Kettering is well placed to serve as a distribution hub, the investment in higher quality housing, education and training and excellent transportation links make it a good location for higher density, higher grade employment. The local Council is particularly keen to attract more businesses employing skilled workforces to complement the investment in facilities and housing locally.

1.3.14 Kettering's location can offer highly competitive cost advantages offering a strategic choice for relocations and consolidations of operations. Prime industrial rents are between 30-45% less than London and the South East and a number of new business parks are being developed, exploiting the excellent transportation links with London and the rest of the country. From corporate headquarters to start-up premises, Kettering offers a wide range of workspace for all types of business, such as the Chesham House Design and Technology Centre that opened in the summer of 2009. There are significant investment opportunities. With the redevelopment of 32,000m² of office led commercial development in the Station

Quarter and the 16,000m² development of the Wadcroft shopping centre for new retail, Kettering offers ongoing investment opportunities.

Figure 1.7 Kettering Town Centre



Delivering the Vision for Kettering Town Centre

1.3.15 As outlined above, Kettering has a number of strengths and opportunities summarised as follows:

Strengths:

- Strong underlying market town character and principal retail centre for the immediate area
- Midlands location and excellent transport links, particularly rail to Europe, London and the North
- Attractive surrounding rural hinterlands
- Affordability of property relative to London and the South East
- Regeneration and development potential
- Centre for health care and health care training, with strong links to Leicester University.

Opportunities:

- Kettering's status as a Growth town, location for business, new housing, cultural facilities as well as retail
- Funding support from Central Government in recognition of this Growth Area status
- Providing a clear delineation of purpose for distinct areas of the town
- Positioning these distinct areas in close proximity to complement one another
- Possible redevelopment of large areas of town centre retail
- The quality of the public realm
- Location and transport links are potentially attractive for new knowledge based economies
- The potential for the town to be a regional centre for heritage and culture.
- An eastern urban extension and potential new infrastructure
- Enhanced railway station
- Enhanced bus links, new interchanges and modal shift from the private car
- Unique and inspirational design complementing strong underlying historic architecture
- Green corridors, new parks and enhanced biodiversity
- Tackling social deprivation and enhancing quality of life

1.3.16 Within this context, the vision for Kettering and its town centre is being delivered. It is seeing several major redevelopments and more than £40 million of public secured investment in the coming months

and years to further improve the town centre to create a vibrant heart for Kettering and the surrounding area that will make people want to return again and again. This investment is more than just a plan, it is a reality. Kettering's new Market Place has won the Regional Town Planning Awards beating off competition from other major towns and cities in the region. Other projects that have been successfully delivered and paying dividends include Chesham House Business Technology and Design Centre. Millions of pounds of private sector investment are flowing into the town centre from retailers and employers alike. With planning consent approved for 5,500 high quality new homes to the East of Kettering bringing with it over £180 million of investment that will be put into the town centre, local transportation links and improvements, schools and community facilities, Kettering will continue to turn its vision into reality.

1.3.17 In order to thrive in the future, the town needs to be able to offer a unique experience that will make people want to return again and again. Recognised as being the retail centre for the surrounding area, Kettering town centre is undergoing a transformation that will see further improvements to shopping, employment, living and visiting experience. Central to the delivery of the vision is the shared commitment of partners to delivering the regeneration aspirations. Partners including the Borough and County Council, North Northants Development Company, Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited, Highways Agency, Health Trust and Police are working closely together to help deliver the shared vision. Planning policies and investment have been put in place to support the delivery of the vision.

1.3.18 To help turn this vision into a reality, an ambitious programme of redevelopment is in progress. The AAP sets out the town centre into a number of distinct but complementary quarters supported by the appropriate planning policies. Complementing this policy framework, the Borough Council's Suite 16 Regeneration Programme is delivering regeneration and economic development. This includes developing areas for new restaurants (The Restaurant Quarter), high street brand shopping, both large department and chain stores (The Shopping Quarter) and 'niche' retail outlets (The Yards). Improvements to the look and feel of streets and transportation links are also in hand and there are plans for investment into new high grade, high density office space (The Station Quarter), capitalising on Kettering's ease of access to London's St. Pancras International Station.

1.3.19 The first quarter to begin development, the Restaurant Quarter due to be completed in early 2011 is already under construction. The initial phase is already complete with the development of the new award winning Market Place which lies at the centre of the Restaurant Quarter. A programme of improvement works is taking place to improve the look and feel of the public space around the Market Place and major retailers considering moving to Kettering have the opportunity to input into the future look and feel of the town. Importantly, land has been acquired at key sites to aid development of the quarters and agents have been appointed to identify potential tenants. The aim is for work to start soon on the second major phase of regeneration with the development of a new shopping quarter at the centre of the town.

The North Northamptonshire Local Development Framework

1.3.20 The Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan is part of the the Local Development Framework (LDF) for North Northamptonshire and will replace elements of the existing Kettering Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in 1995. The LDF comprises a number of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that set out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the Borough. The composition of the current development plan is set out in the North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme. This document sets out how the Council will move from the previous to the current development plan system, and lists which local development documents are to be produced and when. The first DPDs cover the period up to 2021. The LDF includes a vision for the future of North Northamptonshire and objectives and targets, which developments must meet to secure that vision. Once adopted, planning applications and other decisions will be made in accordance with it.

1.3.21 The Local Development Framework:

- Takes account of national and strategic planning policies;
- Identifies sites for, and requirements of, major development;
- Provides the framework of policies for assessing all planning applications;

- Enables infrastructure and service providers to bring forward their services when needed by new development;
- Enables the public to be fully involved in developing local policies and proposals.

The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy

1.3.22 As part of the North Northamptonshire sub-region, the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS) identifies Kettering as a location for new housing and job creation. To complement this growth, the SRS also identifies a focus in Kettering of maintaining the existing role of the town centre through promotion and protection of the existing provision of basic comparison shopping and the development of regionally important niche retail.

1.3.23 In this context, The CSS vision identifies the requirement to deliver homes and jobs as well as infrastructure services and facilities.

- In meeting the Growth Area targets identified in the CSS the Borough of Kettering will be home to 13,100 additional households to 2021 and 16,200 jobs
- The CSS identifies Kettering town centre as a location for redevelopment and expansion. Kettering is identified as the main retail centre for North Northamptonshire and provision is required for a minimum net increase in comparison shopping floorspace of 20,500 m².

The Sustainable Communities Community Strategy

1.3.24 All local authorities are required by the Local Government Act 2000 to "prepare a community strategy for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK."

1.3.25 Building on requirements set out in the CSS, the *Kettering Borough Sustainable Community Strategy* sets out the vision for the borough to be a place where people will want to invest, work and enjoy life - this AAP will enable Kettering town centre to build on and develop its role in delivering this vision and will be a key mechanism for delivering the *Kettering Borough Sustainable Community Strategy*.

1.3.26 The *Kettering Borough Sustainable Community Strategy* is reviewed regularly and includes actions for the following 3-year period, which focus on meeting key aspects of the vision taking priority at the time and reflecting potential opportunities. Some relate to Borough wide policies contained in the LDF, including issues such as affordable housing. Others relate to major developments in the Borough, which are addressed in planning terms in Development Plan Documents, and which are a key priority for many of the stakeholders and service providers involved in the Local Strategic Partnership.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.3.27 The AAP has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) throughout its production to ensure that the document contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development. The SA of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). The AAP is also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC. Although these are distinct assessments the SA and SEA have been combined in one assessment which satisfies the requirements of each and from now on will be referred to as the Sustainability Appraisal.

1.3.28 The Sustainability Appraisal process has tested how the plan performs against the objectives of sustainable development at each stage of the plan making process. The process has shown how the proposals and allocations set out in the AAP will help deliver the vision for the town centre. For example, focusing a significant retail expansion in the Shopping Quarter will help ensure the vitality and viability of the town centre as a shopping destination and centre for economic development in the sub-region, whilst improvements to transport and access will contribute to encouraging sustainable transportation opportunities and climate change adaptation/mitigation measures.

1.4 Vision and Objectives

1.4.1 In the context of growth and regeneration outlined above, the vision for Kettering town centre will guide development in the town centre. It encapsulates the key elements of delivering a thriving, sustainable town centre.

The Vision for Kettering Town Centre

To create a vibrant heart for Kettering; a place that is characterful, distinctive and fun. The town centre will become a focal point for North Northamptonshire.

Achieving the Vision

1.4.2 Seven objectives have been developed to guide the delivery of the vision and to ensure development contributes to the vitality and viability of the town centre. They are organised by theme to ensure that the AAP covers the full scope of issues and topics defined by statutory documents in the planning framework and contextual strategic documents.

Objectives
Objective 1: To create a zoned, vibrant town centre which makes the best use of available land and existing buildings and maximises potential for regeneration.
Objective 2: To implement a step change in quality retail offer incorporating 20,500m ² of comparison retail.
Objective 3: To deliver a new residential community and utilise residential uses to support and complement the quarters.
Objective 4: To create a town centre characterised by the high quality of urban design, architecture and public realm and respect for heritage.
Objective 5: To create a significant increase in office employment space, along with further regeneration opportunities.
Objective 6: To make a safe, welcoming, walkable and well connected town centre.
Objective 7: To deliver a greener town centre with an emphasis on provision of green infrastructure, renewable energy initiatives and environmentally efficient buildings to encourage green living.

